

APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION,

OR,

THE EXCLUSIVE CLAIMS OF ROMANISM AND EPISCOPALIANISM
TO A VALID MINISTRY, WEIGHED AND
FOUND WANTING.

BY

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APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION.*

THE Christian Church is unique in its character. It differs fundamentally from all other organizations in the world. Societies and civil governments may illustrate its nature, but furnish at best but very faint analogies of its constitution. The Church differs essentially from them all. In what does this fundamental diversity consist? Not in the fact that the design of the Church is different from that of all other organizations. The design of temperance societies is to reform drunkards and check the spread of intemperance; of beneficial societies, to render assistance to their members in time of need; of national governments, to protect and promote the civil interests of their citizens; of the Church, to save sinners and make them meet for an inheritance with the saints in light. There is in this respect a vast difference between the Church and other institutions, but the difference is not fundamental. Neither is it to be found in the fact that the Church was ordained directly of God. True, it was established by God more directly than any other institution; but the powers that be, that is, civil governments, are also ordained of God, as St. Paul tells us.

Not in these characteristics does the fundamental difference between the Church and all other organizations come to view, but in the fact that the Christian Church is the organic embodiment of Christianity, an order of life found nowhere else in the world. For Christianity, in its deepest ground, is not an influence simply, exerted on humanity by Christ through the Holy Ghost, neither is it a system of supernatural powers only, nor the true religion merely, but an order of life, flowing directly from the person of Jesus Christ, and actualizing itself in the Christian Church, which is His Body (Eph i. 23). For as the wages of sin is *death*, so the gift of God is *eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord* (Rom. vi. 23). Hence

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the Saviour says of Himself: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; the Resurrection and the Life." In Him was life—uncreated, immortal, eternal life—for the *Word* was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. The Word, who hath life in Himself (John v. 26), became flesh, and flesh—humanity in its generic character—in His Person was made alive, became immortal. Hence as in Adam, all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive (1 Cor. xv. 22). For He has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light. By the mystery of His holy Incarnation; by His holy nativity and circumcision; by His baptism, fasting and temptation; by His agony and bloody sweat; by His cross and passion; by His precious death and burial; by His glorious resurrection and ascension, and by the coming of the Holy Ghost, He conquered Satan, broke the power of sin, overcame the sharpness of death, unlocked the prison doors of Hades, poured a flood of light upon the darkness of the grave, and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

The Christian Church, which is the kingdom of heaven actualizing itself among men, therefore starts in His person, and as His Mystical Body constitutes the form of His presence in the world, by the Holy Ghost, since His death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven. During His earthly sojourn, He was locally present on earth in His natural human body, and as His Divine-human life was then confined to His natural body, through which He manifested forth His glory, so now is His glorified Divine-human life, which is mystically present in the world, through the Holy Ghost since the day of Pentecost, confined on earth to His Mystical Body, the Church. For He is Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all; and we are members of His Body, of His flesh, and of His bones, (Eph. i. 22, 23, and v. 30). As the Incarnate Son of God, He is distinct from, and above His Mystical Body, and possesses a personal human body, with members like those of our own bodies, only that since His resurrection and ascension into Heaven it is positively perfect and wholly glorified; but at the same time also, as the Saviour of the world, He is present through the Holy Ghost with living energy in the Church, which constitutes His Mystical Body, and through which He begets and nourishes new centres of

spiritual life, like unto His own, whereby men become partakers of the Divine nature (2 Peter i. 4), and in having the Church as their mother, have God as their Father.

Christianity is, therefore, truly organic, and as such can no more exist in the world apart from an objective outward constitution, than any other order of life can. Just as vegetable life, though broader and deeper than its manifestations and not identical with them, actualizes itself only in living plants, so does Christianity come before us as a concrete reality only in the Christian Church. Its influence, it is true, extends far beyond the Church in the way of elevating and civilizing mankind; but so also does the influence of vegetable life extend beyond the limits of a tree in the cooling shade which this last casts upon the dry and parched earth, during the burning heat of a mid-summer day. But as vegetable life glorifies the earth actually only in the degree in which its mineral properties are assimilated by plants, and thus converted from dead inorganic matter into living vegetable bodies, so does Christianity, as an order of life, enter into living union with men only when they are born again of water and the Spirit, and thus made members of that objective constitution, the Christian Church, in which alone Christ is present on earth with saving grace. "This constitution, or order of grace, is what our *faith* is taught to receive in the article of the Holy Catholic Church; that great mystery which is denominated Christ's Body, and within which is comprised, according to the Creed, the whole supernatural process of man's salvation, from baptism for the remission of sins, onward to the resurrection of the flesh, and the life everlasting. It is not of the first creation, like the art and science and political institutions of mankind in every other view. It holds directly from Christ in His capacity of glorified superiority to the universal order of nature. He is Head *over all things* to the Church."

In a threefold form this headship of our Lord reveals itself in His Church. He is its Chief Prophet, High Priest and Eternal King. As Chief Prophet He is in Himself the principle and fountain of all knowledge, for in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. ii. 3). As High Priest He is the Mediator, through whom living union and communion have been established and are maintained between God and man. As Eternal

King He has all power in heaven and on earth, and governs, by His word and Spirit, those who are incorporated into the order of grace of which His Church is the organic embodiment. All this He is actually for men since the day of Pentecost, when He was mystically born into the world, through the Holy Ghost, by entering into life union with the one hundred and twenty susceptible persons whom He had gathered unto Himself, during His earthly sojourn, out of the Jewish Church, a dispensation of grace typical of, and preparatory to, the Christian Church. On that day the disciples received the *Promise of the Father* (Luke xxiv. 49)—the Spirit as immanent now in human nature itself through the glorification of Christ—the Holy Ghost (John vii. 39). *He* came as the medium through whom Jesus Christ constituted Himself the Head of the Mystical Body, which He then formed for Himself out of the disciples assembled in the upper room in Jerusalem. Then and there the Christian Church was born. And “as a babe, when born, possesses all the organs of a complete human body, so did the Church on the Day of Pentecost come into existence as a complete spiritual organism,” possessing in Christ through the Holy Ghost, the power of self-preservation and growth. “No essential part, or power, or function of this new creation was wanting.” There was at once a laity, endowed with the life and character of true Church membership; and a ministry empowered to preach, to administer the sacraments, and to organize into a community, and govern, in the spirit of love, those over whom the Holy Ghost had made them overseers; and all alike possessed new spiritual life in Christ through the Holy Ghost.

In one respect there was no difference between the Apostles and the other disciples, between the first ministry and the first laity. Each individual had received the Holy Ghost and possessed the same exalted privilege of communion with Christ, and therefore of direct access to the throne of grace. Laity and ministry had an equal right to the benefits of the Holy Eucharist, as well as to all other blessings which flow from Christ to persons in living union with Him in His Church. All alike were members of Christ by faith, and thus partakers of His anointing. As He had been anointed with the Holy Ghost, as Prophet, Priest and King, so His Mystical Body, as a whole, was a prophetic, sacerdotal and kingly com-

munity. The laity, as well as the ministry, were prophets, priests and kings unto God (Rev. i. 6). Nevertheless, as office-bearers in virtue of the commission given to the eleven (Matt, xxviii. 16), before our Lord's ascension, the Apostles received special gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 4; and Eph. iv. 11-16) whereby they were empowered to act as the Saviour's ambassadors (2 Cor v. 20). As Christian men, they possessed what the other disciples possessed; as officers in the Church of Christ, they were invested with special duties, authority and power. Before His ascension our Lord had said to them: "All power is given unto me in heaven, and in earth; go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 18-20). This commission the Apostles began to exercise on the day of Pentecost, when they were endued with power from on high (Luke xxiv. 49), that is; were actually clothed by Christ, through the Holy Ghost, with the spiritual powers and authority involved in their commission. According to the terms of this commission the Apostles were to stand between Christ and the world lying in wickedness and sin, "to be His witnesses, His legates, the representatives of His authority, and the mediators of His grace among men." The gospel, they were to preach in His Name, was not simply a doctrine for the nations to hear and believe, but *Himself*, present with saving grace in an objective visible constitution, to which individuals in order to be saved were obliged to surrender themselves in penitence and faith; Holy Baptism forming the sacramental means of every true entrance into this supernatural economy of grace. Thus the Christian Church, when fully established, confronted the world as an organized community, growing forth from Jesus Christ, through the Holy Ghost, and held together by the men who had been authorized and empowered to carry into effect officially its conditions and terms. Hence it is said to be built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone (Eph. ii. 20).

The office of the ministry being of such central significance in the establishment of the Christian Church, it must hold essentially the same position always, and thus constitute the organ through

which the Church is perpetuated from one generation to another. This fact involves "the idea of Apostolic succession, and along with it the conception also of ordination, as the veritable channel through which is transmitted mystically from age to age the supernatural authority in which this succession consists. And the succession, to be valid, must be kept up in some way within the bosom of the institution itself; for it holds not from the natural life of the world, nor even from the higher life of the Church collectively taken, but directly from the commission and ordination of Christ, and so can be maintained with its original character from age to age, only as it may have power to transmit the actual virtue of this first supernatural appointment from one generation still onward to another."*

The question of Apostolic succession is, therefore, not an idle one, but a question which challenges our most serious and careful consideration. In it are involved consequences of profound and far reaching significance for all who profess and call themselves Christians; since, as we have seen, he alone can be a true minister of our Lord, invested with authority by Christ Himself, to go forth in His name as His ambassador, representing Him in His Church, founded on the day of Pentecost, who has received his authority from Jesus Christ, through His Apostles, at the hands of their successors. Unquestionably, according to the plain terms of the Apostolic commission, and according to the necessary nature of the Christian Church, as built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone, only he can properly claim to be commissioned by Christ, who performs his ministerial acts by the authority and as the exponent of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, which our Saviour founded upon a rock, against which the gates of Hades shall never prevail, and which is thus necessarily the one true Church.

Such being the truth of God, in advocating it we are not responsible for the consequences which it may involve, but it is our duty to divest it of the false inferences which are frequently drawn from it, when thus definitely stated. We *deny*, therefore, what is often asserted, that this Catholic doctrine of Apostolic succession

*Sermon by Dr. J. W. Nevin, on "The Christian Ministry," MERCERSBURG REVIEW, January No., 1855.

virtually makes ordination the chief sacrament,* and necessarily implies that the minister is of the essence of a sacrament, that is: that Holy Baptism and the Holy Eucharist cannot be validly administered under any circumstances whatever, except by regularly ordained ministers. Evidently the Apostles alone were commissioned to baptize; for the commission was not given to all the disciples, but to the eleven (Matt. xxviii. 16, 19), and yet we find that Ananias, who was only a disciple, a layman (Acts ix. 10), baptized the Apostle Paul. This case was in all respects extraordinary, and thus clearly an exception, but as an exception nevertheless confirms the early decisions of the undivided Catholic Church, in admitting the validity of lay baptism in extreme and urgent cases—in *periculo mortis*. And if one of the sacraments can be validly administered by a layman, there is no logic, no consistent Christian reasoning, and no Scriptural evidence to support the theory maintained by Roman Catholics and High Church Episcopalians, that the consecration of the elements in the Holy Eucharist is conditioned by the Episcopal ordination of the officiating clergyman. Therefore that the validity of a sacrament depends on the word and institution of Christ, and not on the official position of the celebrant, is a Protestant principle more truly Catholic than the position of Romanists and High Church Episcopalians. Of course to be *regularly*, as well as validly administered, the persons who have been set apart by Christ Himself for the purpose, must administer the sacraments; but in necessitous circumstances, which can arise only in the case of baptism, the Church Catholic holds that this sacrament can be irregularly but validly administered by laymen, *not*, however, *in defiance or contempt* of the ministry, but only in case of their unavoidable absence. And, moreover, such irregular acts, to be properly completed, need to be ratified and confirmed by the Church, whereby they receive the official sanction of those whom Jesus Christ has appointed as the stewards of the mysteries of grace.

But to return from this digression. Both from its origin and from its design, which have both been already considered, it is

* Vide Martensen's Dogmatics, Sect. 272, in which this eminent theologian strangely confounds the false claims of the Roman Church with the truth of Apostolic succession.

plain that the office in question must be a single institution, in harmony with itself in all its parts. The commission given to the Apostles, belonged to them only in their collective capacity. And so, as the ministry assumed other forms, whether ordinary or extraordinary, it remained necessarily subject always to the power of the same law. Just as among the Jews the Priesthood was one, though the priests were many and of different orders; so in the Christian Church, however ministers are multiplied, and the forms of their office varied, the office itself can be of force only as it retains always the character of a single body, bound together and in union with itself.*

The Church of Rome lays great stress on this truth, but has pushed it to such an extreme as to totally obscure its real nature. It involves much more than such an external, despotic, arbitrary union as that which the Roman Church endeavors to secure, at the expense of the Scriptures and Church History, by claiming for the Pope, as the vicegerent of Jesus Christ, and successor of Saint Peter, upon whom Jesus Christ founded His Church, personal infallibility and absolute jurisdiction over the whole Christian Church. We will proceed now to examine the exclusive claims of this Church, as well as those of the Episcopal Church, which regards itself as *the Church par excellence*, and will prove conclusively that the great Protestant non-Episcopal Reformation Churches of Germany, as well as all other Protestant bodies that have received and preserved the succession of their ministry through Presbyters, must be acknowledged to possess a ministry as truly valid as that of the Roman Catholic and Episcopal Churches; and that in spite of the lamentable divisions of Christendom, the bond of union has not been wholly severed, but that the different Churches are still essentially one.

In endeavoring to establish the Papal theory of the Church—which claims that no ministry is valid except that which derives its authority from, and is outwardly bound to, the visible centre of the Church, the Pope, through various hierarchical degrees—its advocates appeal to the Holy Scriptures and Tradition. The passages of Scripture quoted are the following: “And the Lord said, Simon,

* Vide Dr. Nevin’s sermon on “The Christian Ministry.”

Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not, and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren;" (Luke xxii. 31, 32); "And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven;" (Matt. xvi. 18, 19); and, "So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter; Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, 'Feed my lambs.' He saith to him again the second time," etc. (John xxi. 15-18).

"We admit at the outset," says Dr. Schaff in his history of the Vatican Council, "that these passages in their obvious meaning, which is confirmed by the history of the Apostolic Church, assign to Peter a certain primacy among the Apostles; he was the leader and spokesman of them, and the chief agent of Christ in laying the foundation of His Church among the Jews and Gentiles. This is significantly prophesied in the new name of Peter given to him. The history of Pentecost (Acts ii.) and the conversion of Cornelius (Acts x.) are the fulfillment of this prophecy, and furnish the key to the interpretation of the passages in the gospels."

This is the scriptural truth of St. Peter's primacy in the Apostolic Church, which is, however, very different from that which the Pope occupies in reference to the Roman Catholic Church. Peter stands pre-eminent among the Apostles, not by special Divine appointment, but because he possessed the natural endowments and mental peculiarities of a leader. These, under the quickening power of the Spirit, made him the most prominent member of the Apostolic college. His impetuous, ardent temperament continually reveals itself and makes him conspicuous, both as a sinner and as a saint. He was the first to give expression to the evangelic faith of the disciples, but he also denied his Lord. Of superiority in rank and official power on the part of Peter over the other Apostles there is no evidence in the New Testament, which is its own best interpreter. Not a single example of the exercise of such jurisdiction

on the part of Peter is to be found, but we do find the very reverse. "He himself, in his epistles, disowns and prophetically warns his fellow-Presbyters against the hierarchical spirit; exhorting them instead of being lords over God's heritage, to be examples to His flock (1 Peter v. 1-4). Paul and John were perfectly independent of him, as the Acts and epistles prove. Paul even openly administered to him a rebuke at Antioch. At the Council of Jerusalem James seems to have presided; at all events, he proposed the compromise which was adopted by the Apostles, elders and brethren. And moreover, to make the above passages of Scripture at all available for its purpose, the Papacy must take for granted, as intervening links of the argument, that which cannot be proved by the New Testament, nor from history, viz: that Peter was Bishop of Rome; that he was there as Paul's superior; that he appointed a successor, and transferred to him his prerogatives."*

Ideas rule the world, and logic is very often the real power behind the throne. It was not the Scriptural account of St. Peter's position among the Apostles that suggested the Papal theory of the Church; but the theological conception of the nature of Church unity, as held by the Fathers even in the third and fourth centuries, sought to maintain and unfold itself, during the Middle Ages, by reading its own ideas into the Scriptures. This theory of the unity of the Church, which comes to view already in Ignatius, and is more fully developed by Cyprian and Augustine, involved more than its authors were aware of. Carried out to its full logical conclusion, it has culminated in the Vatican decree of Papal absolutism and infallibility. These Fathers had hold of a profound truth, and a profound truth underlies "the colossal lie" of the Papacy. Every powerful error rests on some truth, which it has perverted and from which it derives all its strength. The Church is *One and Catholic*, as well as *Holy and Apostolic*. In Christ she possesses all these attributes; but not one of them has ever been fully actualized on earth. Just as the historical Church has never been perfectly holy, so neither has she ever fully actualized the attribute of catholicity, which, whilst it can express itself only through actual concrete forms of Christian life, according to the laws of

*Dr. Schaaf's History of the Vatican Council.

history and humanity related on the one hand to Adam, and on the other to Christ, cannot, however, find full actual embodiment for itself *in any particular age or form of the Church*. The outward, empirical, historical Church, will fully actualize the holy Catholic Church, in which we are taught to believe, only when, having passed through her militant state on earth, her Lord shall come and lead her in triumph, as a bride adorned for her husband, through the everlasting doors into the mansions of glory.

As the Scriptures know nothing of a visible, absolute, infallible centre of unity in the Church, so neither do genuine Tradition and the history of the early Church. The first documents which endeavor to support this conception of Church unity are "the pseudo-Isidoran Decretals, that huge forgery of Papal letters which appeared in the middle of the ninth century, and had for their object the completion of the independence of the Episcopal hierarchy from the State, and the absolute power of the Popes as the legislators and judges of all Christendom. Here the most extravagant claims are put into the mouths of the early Popes, from Clement (91) to Damasus (384), in the barbarous French-Latin of the Middle Ages, and with such numerous and glaring anachronisms as to force the conviction of fraud even upon Roman Catholic scholars. One of these sayings is: 'The Roman Church remains to the end free from stain of heresy!' Soon afterwards arose, in the same hierarchical interest, the legend of the donation of Constantine and his baptism by Pope Sylvester, interpolations of the writings of the Fathers, especially Cyprian and Augustine, and a variety of fictions embodied in the *Gesta Liberii* and the *Liber Pontificalis*, and sanctioned by Gratianus (about 1150) in his *Decretum*, or collection of canons, which (as the first part of the *corpus juris canonici*) became the code of laws for the whole Western Church, and exerted an extraordinary influence. By this series of pious frauds the mediæval Papacy, *which was the growth of ages*, was represented to the faith of the Church as a primitive institution of Christ, clothed with absolute and perpetual authority."

"The Popes since Nicholas I. (858-867), who exceeded all his predecessors in the boldness of his designs, freely used what the

spirit of a hierarchical, superstitious, and uncritical age furnished them. They quoted the fictitious letters of their predecessors as genuine, the Sardican canon on appeals as a canon of Nicæa, and the interpolated sixth canon of Nicæa, 'the Roman Church always had the primacy,' of which there is not a syllable in the original; and nobody doubted them. Papal absolutism was in full vigor from Gregory VII. to Boniface VIII. Scholastic divines, even Thomas Aquinas, deceived by these literary forgeries, began to defend Papal absolutism over the whole Church, and the councils of Lyons (1274) and of Florence (1439) sanctioned it, although the Greeks soon afterward rejected the false union based upon such assumption."*

But for a radical Ultramontane Roman Catholic, facts which are stubborn things for other men pass for nothing. "If facts disagree with his dogmas, all the worse for the facts. All you have to do is to ignore or to deny them, or to force them, by unnatural interpretations, into reluctant obedience to the dogmas." For instance, Cardinal Manning, as quoted by Dr. Schaff, speaks of history (*Petri. Privil. III. p. 18*), as "a wilderness without guide or path," and says: "Whosoever any doctrine is contained in the divine revelation of the Church, all difficulties from human history are excluded, as Tertullian lays down, by prescription. The only source of revealed truth is God; the only channel of His revelation is the Church. No human history can declare what is contained in that revelation. The Church alone can determine its limits, and therefore its contents."

All the forgeries of the middle ages have therefore become infallible truths, since the Church has sanctioned them. The end must indeed here *sanctify the means*. Verily, they need sanctification. Is not God in History as well as in the Church? Can one fact contradict another fact? Do not all truths mutually explain each other? The One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, against which the gates of Hades shall never prevail, does not rest on forgeries and falsehoods. She is the ground and pillar of the truth.

* For a detailed account of the above facts, thus briefly enumerated by Dr. Schaff, in his *History of the Vatican Council*, see "The Pope and the Council," by Janus: Roberts Brothers, 1870. Authorized translation from the German.

Evidently the exclusive claims of the Roman Church rest on a rotten foundation.

We pass on to consider the claims of Episcopalianism. According to this theory, in the time of the Apostles the Ministry of the Church consisted of *three orders*; Apostles, Bishops or Elders, and Deacons. These three orders are of Divine appointment, and therefore must be continued in the precise form in which they were instituted, through every age of the Church. Each order exists by Divine right, but the succession is limited to the highest order. Apostolic succession is therefore confined to the Episcopate, which has taken the place of the Apostolate. Accordingly, no ministry is valid except that which derives its succession through the Episcopate, represented in every ordination by one or more Bishops. It is admitted that in the time of the Apostles, as is evident from the New Testament, the names Bishop and Presbyter were used interchangeably and applied indiscriminately to the same order of ministers, to those now called Presbyters or Pastors, but out of respect to the original Apostles appointed immediately by our Lord, their successors, who at first were also called Apostles, soon after the Apostolic age, "deeming it not befitting to retain that name for common usage, agreed with the ministers of the second order, that the former should thenceforward be known exclusively as Bishops, and the latter only as Presbyters or Elders."* This fact, it is claimed, is substantiated by Theodoret and St. Ambrose†. But their testimony does not prove that there are three *orders* in the ministry *de jure divino*; and, moreover, if taken in the Episcopalian sense, is in direct conflict with that of St. Clement, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, and other Fathers, as well as with the Reformers of the Church of England themselves, as will be shown hereafter.

The error which lies at the root of the Anglican theory, is that this theory conceives of the Church more as a mechanism than as an organism. Its advocates fail to realize that the Church is our Lord's Body (Col. i. 24), and, therefore, the organic embodiment of His life, mystically present in the world through the Holy Ghost;

* Rev. H. L. Ziegenfuss, on "What Constitutes a lawful Ministry?" "Agreed with the ministers of the second order!" A plausible way of putting it, and a good specimen of *petitio principii*.

† For the quotations commonly adduced from these Fathers, see pages 21-22.

but regard it rather as a Divine establishment, upheld by certain laws and forms inexorably fixed for all time. Hence the ministry, according to their view, is not an organic function of the Body Mystical, but an institution externally related to the Church, and composed of three sharply-defined orders; the powers of each order being definitely determined by stringent laws that can under no circumstances be relaxed.

This conception is altogether too external. The Church is not a mechanism, but an organism that varies its form as its life, through the opposition which it ever meets with from the world, is gradually with great difficulty unfolded. The Church, therefore, has a history. It confronts us as a living institution, whose form does not create its life, but whose life is continued with its original power under different forms. And what is true of the Church as a whole in this respect, is true also of her ministry. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one Spirit, one Body, and one ministry. "Wherefore He saith, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. And He gave some, Apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; from whom the whole Body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Eph. iv. 8, 11, 12, 13, 16).

Does the Apostle mean to assert, in the first part of this quotation, that our Saviour instituted four, or perhaps five, orders in the Ministry—Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers? And how many orders does he speak of in 1. Cor. xii. 28, where he says: "And God has set some in the Church, first Apostles, secondarily Prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues?" Must we add Presbyters and Deacons, or are these "orders" here described by other names? These passages of Scripture, as well as others of similar import, in which the doctrine of the ministry is

most fully set forth by the Apostle, are in a great measure ignored by Episcopalians, and have always puzzled them, and all other earnest men who have studied the Apostle's language with the honest purpose of discovering which one of the existing forms of Church government is in accordance with that instituted in the beginning by Divine appointment. The difficulty, however, does not arise from the teaching of the Apostle. It only comes to view when we assume that fixed and definite orders of the ministry and forms of government were given in the beginning by Divine appointment, to be of force for all time. But "it is obvious that when the Redeemer established His Church on earth He did not immediately endow it with a full and complete apparatus of officers, orders and forms of government. On the contrary, He bestowed on it only a single office—one that was exceedingly simple in its character, and yet indispensable—when He appointed the Apostles His witnesses. He designed that other and fuller forms should be developed from within, by the self-determination of the Church, and in correspondence to the exigencies of the times; and the primitive office, the Apostolate, was so constituted as to expand like a tree, sending forth successively, as branches, other forms of the same office, adapted to new times and circumstances."* The office of the ministry is accordingly a single institution, deriving its authority and power always from the commission given to the eleven. The Deacons, and Presbyters or Bishops, ordained by the Apostles, had part in their ministry, and when the Apostolate itself passed away, its ordinary powers and authority were continued under other forms. The ministry itself is an essential factor in the constitution of the Church, but its forms vary according to circumstances, only those which are most simple and fundamental being common to every age of the Church.

In the beginning the Apostles went forth as missionaries, preaching the Word, administering the sacraments, and attending to all the duties which grew out of their position. Soon afterwards Deacons were ordained (Acts vi.), evidently not, however, according to the whole tenor of the narrative, because the Lord Jesus had commanded the Apostles so to do, but because circumstances required

*Lange's Commentary, Acts, p. 106.

it. The particular circumstances under which the first Bishops or Presbyters were appointed are not given, but we find that so soon as the converts of the Apostles were organized into congregations, certain officers were ordained to take charge of them, and were called sometimes Bishops (*ἐπισκοποι*) (Acts xx. 28; Tit. i. 7; Phil. i. 1; 1 Tim. iii. 1); and sometimes Elders (*πρεσβυτεροι*), (Acts xi. 30; xiv. 23; xv. 2, 4; xxi. 18; 1 Peter v. 1; James v. 14, etc.), the former name describing their position as overseers in the church, and the latter being a title of honor. These officers were ordained by the Apostles with the concurrence of the churches (Acts xiv. 23; Tit. i. 5). Their duties were to oversee, to administer order and exercise discipline, to watch over pure doctrine, and to teach. The Apostles continued, however, as long as they lived, to wield the supreme direction of the churches, but not because they looked upon themselves as an order of the ministry distinct from, and superior to, that of Bishops or Elders. They ruled then as now, through the inspired Word, of which they were the infallible organs. Instead of jealously guarding their superiority in rank as by divine right, they put themselves on a level with the Presbyters. St. Peter calls himself a *fellow elder* (*συμπρεσβύτερος*) (1 Peter v. 1), when addressing the Elders in his first epistle. And the only official title with which St. John speaks of himself is that of Elder (*πρεσβυτερος*). His second epistle commences, "*The Elder* unto the elect lady," and the third, "*The Elder* unto the well beloved Gaius." The distinctive functions of the Apostles were, for the most part, extraordinary, and therefore not transmissible. In their ordinary powers and rights, which alone were capable of transmission, they were simply equal to Presbyters, and, of course then, Presbyters or Elders in these respects equal to them (1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6; 1 Peter v. 1; 2 John 1; 3 John 1.) The first successors of the Apostles were, therefore, Presbyters, and not an order of officers superior to them by Divine right. And no subsequent elevation of Bishops as a distinct class of ministers, no ecclesiastical regulations, and no long-continued Church usage can take away from Presbyters, as official organs of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, their inherent power to transmit, through prayer and the laying on of hands, a valid succession of the Apostolic and Divinely-commissioned Ministry of Jesus Christ.

Neither can the cases of Timothy and Titus be cited as making against this conclusion. These men were not Diocesan or Metropolitan Bishops by Divine right, but Presbyters, whose vocation was extraordinary, and who acted in the capacity of evangelists, or apostolic legates. As to the question of ordination, we find that St. Timothy was ordained by a body of Presbyters, of whom St. Paul was one (1 Tim. iv. 14, and 2 Tim. i. 6). That he was not stationed at Ephesus, as a Diocesan bishop, when St. Paul wrote his Epistles to him, is evident from 1 Tim. i. 3, and 2 Tim. iv. 9. (For further information in regard to St. Timothy's position in the Apostolic Church see 1. Cor. iv. 17; xvi. 10; Rom. xvi. 21; Col. i. 1; Heb. xiii. 23, etc.). That Titus, also, was not the Diocesan bishop of Crete, appears from Tit. i. 5, and iii. 12.

There are, indeed, different grades in the ministry, but not different orders in the Anglican sense. The presbyterate is central and fundamental. Out of it other forms of office were in the beginning, and still are developed as circumstances require, some higher and some lower than the presbyterate, in its commonly accepted sense. But these do not constitute different orders in the sense that they are all separately of Divine appointment, and must therefore, necessarily be continued. That the Fathers knew nothing of three different *orders* in the ministry, in the Anglican sense, is unwittingly shown by Bingham in his *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, in trying to make out that they did.* After begging

* This eminent author, with all his learning and acuteness, sometimes resorts to strange expedients to make out his points. In reference to the succession of Bishops in the Church of Rome, he says: "It is true, there is a little difference in the account which these authors give of the succession; for some reckon Linus first, then Anacletus, then Clement; others begin with Clement, and reckon him the first in order from St. Peter. But this is easily reconciled by learned men, who make it appear that Linus and Anacletus died whilst St. Peter lived, and that Clement was ordained their successor by St. Peter also. So that we have two or three persons, by this account, ordained successively Bishops of Rome by the hands of the Apostles." (*Antiquities of the Christian Church*, Book II., chapter i., section 4.) Dr. John Dick, who, although a *Presbyterian*, was, I suppose, a learned man, says: "It happens, unfortunately for the high claims of the Church of Rome, that it is not easy to tell who came in the room of Peter, who, they pretend, was the first Bishop. Clement, Clitus, Linus, and Anacletus, have been mentioned; but it is doubted whether Clitus and Anacletus were not the same individual, and in what order the persons now named succeeded each other; while some have suspected that they are all contemporary, and equally Bishops of Rome, as there were several Bishops at the same time in Philippi." (*Dick's Theology*, Volume ii., Lecture 98.)

the question of the Divine right of Diocesan Bishops, by asserting that "the most ancient distinction that occurs, is that of the superior clergy into three distinct *orders*,"* he proceeds to show that the ancients used the words *ordo*, *gradus*, *officium*, interchangeably; which is the very thing our Anglican brethren refuse to do, because, as they claim, the Episcopate is not a grade, but an order of the ministry.

We freely admit that at the close of the apostolic age, after the destruction of Jerusalem, probably with the advice of St. John and other apostles still living, the Episcopal form of Church government was gradually introduced, having for its object the unity of the Church in the new critical stage of history upon which it was then entering. But that the Bishops appointed to govern a number of churches together constituting a diocese, were not regarded as an "order" of the ministry superior to Presbyters by divine right, is clear from the epistle of Clemens Romanus to the Corinthians, "the only indubitably genuine work of any uninspired Christian writer of the first century, who in express terms identifies Bishops and Presbyters; represents the office of Presbyter as highest in the Church, and the Presbyters as the direct and sole successors of the Apostles; divides the officials of the Church into Bishops and Deacons, and speaks of a number of Bishops in one congregation."† Therefore we conclude that "the original New Testament apostolic idea of the Episcopate was that of the common rule of pastors in the congregation, and that the Episcopate, as distinct in any sense from the Presbyterate, or of the Presbyterate as in any sense (for example that of ruling eldership) distinct from the Episcopate, is not of Divine right or apostolic institution."‡ This fact is confirmed by Jerome, the most learned of all the Latin Fathers, who says: "Among the ancients, Presbyters and Bishops were the very same; but by little and little, for plucking up plants of dissension, the whole care was devolved upon one. As the Presbyters therefore know, that they are subjected to him who is set over them by the custom of the Church; so let the Bishops know, that they are superior to the Presbyters rather by custom than by any real appoint-

* Antiquities, Volume I., Liber ii., section 1.

† Dr. C. P. Krauth, on "The Doctrine of the Ministry."

‡ Idem.,

ment of Christ.”* The great St. Augustine also says: “The office of Bishop is above the office of Priests, not by authority of the Scriptures, but after the names of honor which the custom of the Church hath now obtained.”†

In reference to the leading men of the English reformation, such as Archbishop Cranmer, Bishop Jewell, Archbishop Whitgift, Archbishop Grindal, Bishop Cooper, and others, Keble says: “It is enough, with them, to show that the government by Bishops and Archbishops is ancient and allowable; they never venture to urge its exclusive claim, or to connect the succession with the validity of the holy sacraments.”‡

Cranmer declares that “the Bishops and Priests were at one time the same, and were no two things, but both one office, in the beginning of the Christian religion.”§

Hooker paraphrases the testimony of Jerome, already cited, and expresses his acquiescence in it.||

Of the pre-eminence of Bishops by Divine right, Archdeacon Mason says: “If by *jure divino* you understand a law and commandment of God, binding all Christian Churches, universally, perpetually, unchangeably, and with such absolute necessity that no other form of regiment may in any case be admitted; in this sense neither may we grant it, nor yet can you prove it to be *jure divino*.”¶

In the light of what has now been said, the meaning of the following passages from Theodoret and St. Ambrose, before alluded to, and of which Bingham makes so much account, becomes intelligible. Theodoret says: “The same persons were anciently called promiscuously both Bishops and Presbyters, whilst those who are now called Bishops were called Apostles. But shortly after, the name of Apostles was appropriated to such only as were Apostles indeed; and then the name Bishop was given to those who before were called Apostles.”** St. Ambrose speaks as follows: “They who are

* Comment. in Tit. i. 5, Opp. Ton. vol. 6, p. 163; edit. Victorii, Paris, 1623.

† Quoted by Bishop Jewell. [Defence of his Apol. p. 123.]

‡ Preface to Hooker's Polity, xxx.

§ Burnet's Reform., App. Bk. 3.

|| Eccles. Polity, Bk. 7, Ch. 5.

¶ Appendix to his *Vindiciæ*. The above quotations are taken from Dr. Seiss's *Ecclesia Lutherana*.

** Bingham's Eccles. Antiq., Bk. 2, Ch. 2, Sect. 1.

now called Bishops were originally called Apostles. But the Holy Apostles being dead, they who were ordained after them to govern the Churches could not arrive at the excellency of those first; nor had they the testimony of miracles, but were in many other respects inferior to them; therefore they thought it not decent to assume to themselves the name of Apostles; but, dividing the names, they left to Presbyters the name of the presbytery, and they themselves were called Bishops.”* There is no intimation in these passages that the men appointed to govern the Churches constituted a class of officers superior to Presbyters by Divine right; but these authors simply mean that the Bishop, who exercised the office of President or Superintendent over his fellow-Bishops, or, in other words, occupied the position of *primus inter pares*, when it was found necessary with the growth of the Church in different places to bind together its congregations through some form of government, was at first known by the name of Apostle, and afterwards by common consent took the title of Bishop, leaving to the Bishops under his care the name of Presbyter. Unless taken in this way, the testimony of these men flatly contradicts that of the other Fathers of the Church.

Of the oft-quoted testimony of St. Ignatius, upon which great stress is laid by modern Anglicans, but which is always uncertain, on account of the gross corruptions and interpolations with which his epistles abound, Bishop Stillingfleet says: “In all those thirty-five testimonies produced out of Ignatius’ epistles for Episcopacy, I can meet with but one which is brought to prove the least semblance of an institution of Christ for Episcopacy; and if I be not deceived, the sense of that place is clearly mistaken, too.”†

It is not necessary that we examine all the Church Fathers in detail. When critically reviewed by the impartial student, it is found, as Dr. Krauth says, that their testimony in favor of Diocesan Episcopacy by Divine right, can be cited only when their writings are artificially and violently interpreted, “by confounding different kinds of Episcopacy and of Bishops; by grouping as a unit Christian

*Bingham’s Eccles. Antiq., Bk. 2, Ch. 2, Sect. 1., taken from Amalarius de Offic. Eccles., Bk. 2, Ch. 13.

†Divine Right of Forms of Church Government, vol. 2, part 2, chap. 6, quoted by Dr. Dick in his Lectures on Theology.

antiquity at very different stages ; by regressive constructions in which a later antiquity is read back into an earlier one ; by making far more of the evidence which seems favorable to it, than the evidence can fairly bear ; by continually substituting the proof of the existence of Episcopacy at a certain period, for the proof of its Divine right ; and in general, by an extremely one-sided partisanship throughout." " As it is, therefore, an error on the one side to assert that the church must have Diocesan Bishops as of Divine right, so is it *an error on the other* to assert that she may not have them in her liberty as of human right. As there is no *jus divinum* for the Diocesan Episcopate, so is there, if the Episcopate be rightly ordered, no *jus divinum* against it."

That the power of ordination should very early be reserved to Diocesan Bishops does not appear at all remarkable when we remember that, in virtue of their official position, they were the highest exponents of authority and power in the Church, as then constituted. This right they continued to exercise as the Church advanced through different stages of historical development, in subordination to their superiors in office. This was the case when the Diocesan Episcopate grew into the Metropolitan Episcopate, and so continued when the Metropolitan Episcopate logically developed into the Universal Episcopate, first claimed in the Greek Church, and afterwards with more success in the Roman Church, by constituting the Bishop of Rome the Metropolitan of Metropolitans. In this way the right of ordination and the succession of the ministry were intertwined and bound up with the Roman hierarchy, not by Divine right, but through the establishment and prevalence of a monarchical form of government in the Church. Throughout the ages which intervened between the time of the Apostles and the mighty Reformation of the sixteenth century, every Presbyter or Priest, as a divinely commissioned office-bearer in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, founded by Jesus Christ, possessed in latent form the power of ordination, which, under proper circumstances, he could with other Presbyters have put into exercise. And when the Reformers by necessity separated themselves from the Roman hierarchy, they did not originate a new Church, but simply cast off the shell of Romanism, which had hardened around the true life of the holy Catholic Church, and was stunting its

growth. The Reformation was not a protest against the Catholic Church, but only against the then existing Roman form of the Church. It was in the strictest sense a reformation within the bosom of the Catholic Church; the historical product of its life, which, growing in might for ages, burst forth in new forms, and then the powers originally granted to Presbyters were reasserted and put into exercise.

The form which the Protestant Church assumed during the Reformation differed in many respects radically from Romanism, but the Church under this new form was nevertheless a legitimate continuation of the Catholic Church. For "the Reformers firmly believed in the Church as the Body of Christ, being in order before its members, over them, and as carrying in its bosom, from the Head, the only hope and the only resources of salvation for men. Hence their zeal in holding fast to the old power beneath the powerful struggles of the new. Their ministry carried with it the old succession of ordination; their sacraments were adhered to in their true sacramental sense and power; their faith was the *Creed*, as it reigned from the earliest age; their Cultus owned the objective and sacramental, and had its home in the bosom of the Church; and their government rested, in its ultimate ground, on the authority of the Church."*

All this is true not only of the Reformation in England, where the Episcopal form of Church government was retained, but also of Continental Europe, where the Presbyterian form of government was introduced. Neither did the Church of England then regard Bishops as an order of the ministry, superior, by Divine right, to Presbyters. This fact is attested by the Book of Common Prayer itself. According to the Ordinal of Edward VI., restored by Elizabeth, Priests were consecrated Bishops without a word in reference to the communication of any additional ministerial power even, and without any mention of Episcopacy.† The same fact

*Dr. Harbaugh: *MERCERSBURG REVIEW*, 1855, Jan. No.

† The words used in ordaining Presbyters were the following (taken by Milner from Bishop Sparrow's Collection, p. 158, and given by him in "End of Controversy," Letter 29): "Receive the Holy Ghost: whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained; and be thou a faithful dispenser of the Word of God, and of His Holy Sacraments." For the consecration of Bishops these words (*Ibid.*, p. 164) were used: "Take the Holy

also appears from the conduct and writings of the English divines of that period. These eminent theologians fully and freely acknowledge the validity of the non-Episcopal Protestant ministry of Germany.

"It is notorious," says Edwin Hall, "that the English Reformers uniformly treated the non-Episcopal foreign Churches (Lutheran and Reformed) as true Churches and ministers."*

Gaillard testifies, "that the Cranmers, Ridleys, Latimers, Hoopers, Jewells, and Hookers, of the days of Edward VI., and Queen Elizabeth, though persuaded in favor of Episcopacy, and zealously attached to it, yet cordially embraced the Lutheran Churches as sisterly communions."†

Bishop Burnet remarks, that "not only these who penned the Thirty-nine Articles, but the body of the Church, for above half an age after, did acknowledge the foreign Churches to be true Churches, as to all the essentials of a Church."‡

Bishop Hall writes, "The Reformed Churches, which want this government (*i. e.* of Bishops), we do love and honor as our sister Churches, as the dear spouse of Christ. Your uncharitableness offers to choke me with those scandalous censures and disgraceful terms, which some of ours have let fall upon those Churches and their eminent professors; which, I confess, it is more easy to be sorry for than, on some hands, to excuse."§

"Dr. Jackson, Bishop Sanderson, Cousin, Bishop of Durham, and Bishop Taylor, have expressed themselves to the same effect."||

Ghost, and remember that thou stir up the grace of God, which is in thee by the imposition of hands." These forms were in perfect harmony with the decision of of Cranmer, that "Bishops and Priests were no two things, but one and the same office."

More than one hundred years afterwards, in 1662, THE ORDINAL WAS CHANGED. The form of ordaining a Presbyterian was thus altered: "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed to thee by the imposition of our hands: Whose sins thou shalt forgive," &c. The form of consecrating Bishops was thus enlarged: "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Bishop in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: and remember that thou stir up the grace of God, which is in thee."

* Puritans and their Principles, p. 279.

† History of the Reformation, p. 552.

‡ Expositions of the Articles. Art. XXIII.

§ Hall's works, vol. 9, p. 690, Pratt's Ed., 1803.

|| Ecclesia Lutherana, by Dr. J. A. Seiss, p. 90.

Accordingly Dr. Stone says: "In those days of close searching into the essence and nature of things spiritual and ecclesiastical, there was no idea, among this class of English Divines, of shutting the Reformed Continental Churches out of the pale of visible Catholicism; but they held them to be the Church of England's dearest sisters abroad."*

The "judicious" Hooker goes farther than this, and acknowledges a well-known fact, which the history of the Reformation fully confirms, in these graceful terms: "For my own part, I dare not deny the salvation of the Lutheran Churches, *which have been the chiefest instruments of ours.*"†

Dr. Cousin very pertinently adds: "If we renounce all the ministers of Germany, what then will become of the Protestant party? If the Church and kingdom of England acknowledged them, as they did, why should we, that are but private persons, utterly disclaim their communion?"‡

These testimonies stand fast. Modern Anglicanism *dare not* ignore them.§

That there were irregularities in the succession of the non-Episcopal Protestant ministry in the time of the Reformation, as perhaps in the case of Calvin, who in the Roman Church was only a sub-deacon, and, it may be, never ordained to the priesthood, is not

*Discourses on the Church, p. 120.

†Sermon on Habak. i. 4, appendix to Ecc. Polity; Complete Works, vol. 2, p. 307. Appleton Ed.

‡Letter to Cordel, February 7, 1650.

§ In the "Annotated Book of Common Prayer," a very learned and in many respects admirable work, edited by Rev. John Henry Blunt, M. A., the author of the Introduction to the Ordinal, with the characteristic modesty of the Anglican divines of the present age, makes use of the following remarkable language, which deserves very high commendation for its veracity, and which we recommend as a fine specimen of the Christian charity for which that school of English theologians who delight to call themselves Anglican Catholics, has of late years become quite notorious: "The Catholic Church has *ever* held this doctrine, that true ministrations of grace depend on *Episcopal* ministries, and has *always* regarded all other ministries, *whether assumed to be conferred by Presbyters*, undertaken at will, or bestowed by a call from the congregation, *to be wholly invalid*. Luther, Knox and Wesley were but priests, Whitefield a deacon, Calvin a sub-deacon, and others mere laymen; every mission by their hands is therefore *absolutely null and void, according to scriptural authority, apostolic practice, and the unbroken tradition of eighteen centuries!!*" A very Blunt assertion indeed—but an assertion that sounds very flat in connection with the statements of the illustrious worthies quoted above.

denied. How then do we vindicate the validity of our Protestant ministry? "Not by any outward succession in the case of the ministry, nakedly and separately considered; but certainly not by any theory, either, which overthrows the necessity of a true historical succession in the life of the Church and makes it competent for any body of Christians, under any circumstances, to start an entirely new Church. It is the life of the Church as such, the life of the Church as an organic historical whole, which alone can fully legitimate and clothe with power the needful organs of this life, and their necessary functions. If then we must admit some disturbance in the ordinary law of ministerial succession at the Reformation, it does not follow at once that the succession itself for this reason fell to the ground; the true succession lay in the life of the Church as a whole; and if it can be shown that *this* gave birth to the Reformation, it must be allowed to have been sufficient at the same time to make good, in the way of inward reproductive force, any *unavoidable* defect that was found to attend, in this revolution, the outward genealogy of the Protestant ministry. After all, it is the Church, the presence of Christ's life in His body, which supports the true line of the ministry, and not the line of the ministry that upholds mechanically the being and authority of the Church. On this broad principle we justify the Reformation. It was the product of the old Catholic Church itself; the central consciousness of the Christian world had been struggling towards it for centuries before; it was in the end the organic outburst plainly of the life of Christianity, as an objective historical whole, which simply laid hold of the Reformers, and brought itself to pass by them, as its organs, without any calculation of their own."*

If, however, our Roman Catholic and Episcopalian friends will not accept this solution of the difficulty, we beg leave to remind them of certain defects in the succession of the ministry in their communions, judged according to their own theories of the ministry. Behold the following admission, made by a prominent Roman Catholic: "I grant, sir, that, from the various commotions and accidents to which all sublunary things are subject, there have been several

* Dr. J. W. Nevin, MERCERSBURG REVIEW, 1849, July No., p. 385.

vacancies or interregnums in the Papacy ; but none of them have been of such a lengthened duration as to prevent a *moral* (?) continuation of the Popedom, or to hinder the execution of the important office annexed to it. I grant, also, that there have been rival Popes and unhappy schisms in the Church, particularly one great schism, at the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth century.* Janus, in his book on "The Pope and the Council," page 43, mentions other and greater difficulties. He says: "Since the eighth century the ordinations of certain Popes began to be annulled, and the Bishops and Priests ordained by them were compelled to be re-ordained. This occurred first in 769, when Constantine II., who had got possession of the Papal chair by force of arms, and kept it for thirteen months, was blinded and deposed at a synod, and all his ordinations pronounced invalid. But the strongest case occurred at the end of the ninth century, after the death of Pope Formosus, when the repeated rejections of his ordinations threw the whole Italian Church into the greatest confusion, and produced a general uncertainty as to whether there were any valid sacraments in Italy. Auxilius, who was a contemporary, said that through this universal rejection and repetition of orders (*ordinatio, exordinatio, et superordinatio*) matters had come to such a pass in Rome that for twenty years the Christian religion had been interrupted and extinguished in Italy."

Stubborn facts also stare Episcopalians in the face. Milner, ("End of Controversy," Letter xxix.) makes the following statement of these facts: "The chief question which remains to be discussed concerns the ministry of the Church of England: namely, whether the first Protestant bishops, appointed by Queen Elizabeth, when the Catholic bishops were turned out of their sees, did or did not receive valid consecration from some other bishop, who himself was validly consecrated? *The discussion of this question has filled many volumes, the result of which is that the orders are, to say the least, exceedingly doubtful.* For, first, it is certain that the doctrine of the Fathers of this Church was very loose, as to the necessity of consecration and ordination. Its chief founder, Cranmer, solemnly subscribed his name to the position that princes

*Milner "End of Controversy," Letter xxx.

and governors, no less than bishops, can make Priests, and that no consecration is appointed by Scripture to make a Bishop or Priest. In like manner, Barlow, on the validity of whose consecration that of Matthew Parker and of all succeeding Anglican bishops chiefly rests, preached openly that the king's appointment, without any orders whatsoever, suffices to make a bishop. This doctrine seems to have been broached by him to meet the objection that he himself had never been consecrated: in fact, the record of such a transaction has been hunted for in vain, during these two hundred years. Secondly, it is evident, from the books of controversy, still extant, that the Catholic doctors, Harding, Bristow, Stapleton, and Cardinal Allen, who had been fellow-students and intimately acquainted with the first Protestant Bishops, under Elizabeth, and particularly with Jewel, bishop of Sarum, and Horne, bishop of Winton, constantly reproached them, in the most pointed terms, that they had never been consecrated at all; and that the latter, in their voluminous replies, never accepted of the challenge or refuted the charge, otherwise than by ridiculing the Catholic consecration. Thirdly, it appears that after an interval of fifty years from the beginning of the controversy, namely, in the year 1613, when Mason, chaplain to Archbishop Abbot, published a work, referring to an alleged register at Lambeth of Archbishop Parker's consecration by Barlow, assisted by Coverdale and others, the learned Catholics universally exclaimed that the register was a forgery, unheard of till that date, and asserted, among other arguments, that, admitting it to be true, it was of no avail, as the pretended consecrator of Parker, though he had sat in several sees, had not himself been consecrated for any of them."

Since, then, we are all obliged to acknowledge, the Romanist as well as the Protestant, the Episcopalian as well as the Presbyterian, that there have been, at different times in the history of the Church, *disturbances in the ordinary law* of ministerial succession, must we also admit that the succession itself has for this reason been interrupted, and thus deprived of its validity? Not at all. For it is the presence of Christ's life in His Body as an organic historical whole—which life is broader and deeper than its ordinary manifestations, and therefore not absolutely limited by them—that supports the true succession of the ministry, and by its innate reproductive power

overcomes the defects which, under extraordinary circumstances, imperil the historical continuance of the One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. At all times and under all circumstances, in the midst of world-crises, attended with great confusion and uncertainty on the part of men, just as really as before and after these ecclesiastical upheavals, the Lord Jesus Christ, by the power of His divine-human life, present through the Holy Ghost in His Mystical Body, has continued in His Church the needful organs of His life and their necessary functions, so that the gates of Hades have at no time prevailed against His Church founded on a rock, neither have the power and authority of the original commission given to the Apostles been lost. His promise: "*Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world,*" has at no time been withdrawn. His grace and power have proven themselves sufficient for every emergency. Sects that have assumed to create a ministry of their own, possess indeed only a humanly appointed ministry; but the Church Catholic, in spite of all its lamentable divisions into Roman, Greek, Anglican, Lutheran, Reformed, Presbyterian, Methodist, Episcopalian, and still other branches, has a ministry as truly valid as that which the Church of the first century possessed.